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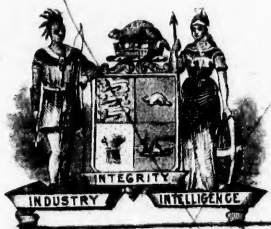
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**"The causes of the Rising in the
Red River Settlement,
1869-70."**

ALEX. McARTHUR, ESQ.

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Can. McArthur, Alexander
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Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society, Winnipeg.

The Causes of the Rising in the Red River Settlement.
1869-70.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE HISTORICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY BY

MR. A. MCARTHUR.

The first positive proof I had of that event came under my notice on a cold raw morning in the last days of October, 1869. I was approaching the River Salle, some nine or ten miles south of Fort Garry, on the occasion of my second trip to the settlement, when word came to us from a house on the wayside that we should be stopped before crossing the river. When within a few hundred yards of the bridge an obstruction, something like a pole fence, appeared across the whole width of the road, which on either side was here bounded by poplar woods.

A few men with guns in their hands were standing on the other side of the barricade. One of their number was dispatched to a tannery which stood in a hollow close by the bridge, and in a few minutes returned with some one having authority. After a few questions some poplar poles were thrown aside from the slight construction in front of us, and we were allowed to pass through. Some of the information requested of us related to our own journey, the rest to the expected Governor. We were asked, among other things, whether we had any connection with the new government. We, in our turn, put some questions, and in reply were told that the rather simple-looking obstruction across the road was intended to keep out Governor McDougall and his whole retinue and, strange as it may seem, it effected this purpose. I shall endeavor to avoid all cause of ill-feeling, while at the same time stating the whole truth so far as it lies within my knowledge. The more than a dozen years which have elapsed since most of the events connected with the rising took place may help me in both purposes.

I may be pardoned if I briefly refer to some special qualifications which should enable me to treat this subject with perhaps a greater degree of accuracy and familiarity than most of our other members.

Besides having been in the employment for some years of the company, which governed Rupert's Land, and in this way having formed the acquaintance of many of those entrusted with this Government, including the Governor of Assiniboia, I had visited the colony before the disturbances began, and so had an opportunity of watching the movement from its inception. On my first journey to the settlement I travelled for some days in the company of the

Governor when he was on his way from a visit to the board in London. The terms of transfer had been arranged, and thinking that the new rulers of the country in which he had resided most of a pretty long lifetime might wish to consult him he had called at Ottawa on his way back. His account of the reception he met with was far from being favorable to the authorities there; in fact he accused them of great discourtesy. He was left waiting for an interview for some days, and when it was obtained, I think with some inferior member of the Cabinet, his advice was not asked for as to the mode in which the Government should be assumed or carried on. The Governor was usually cautious and diplomatic, but on this occasion he plainly intimated that they would not find it child's play to rule the North-West. It had in the past been no easy place to govern, and under new rulers he thought the difficulties would increase. A residence in the settlement during the winter of the rising enabled me to see or hear at first hand the events of each day. On the day of the capture of the victims of Governor McDougall's misapprehension of his powers and Col. Dennis' bungling and flight, I represented those who had at the call of their country, as they were led to believe, taken up arms in her cause in an interview with Governor McTavish and later in the day was present under protest at an interview with the half-breed leader, held between himself and my co-representative. Some days spent in Ottawa in the early summer of '70 enabled me to be present at the debate on the Act which was intended to remedy the blunders committed the previous year, and I was again back in Manitoba a few weeks after the arrival there of Col. Wolseley with the Imperial and Colonial troops, and was a witness of the initial effort to set the machinery of responsible government agoing in the new Province.

All are now pretty familiar with the early history of Rupert's Land and the Red River settlement.

The fur traders from Montreal, chiefly French, were the first to visit the Red River valley. They were succeeded in the management of the trade by Scotch Highlanders; the running or voyages and carrying being still carried on by the French. Towards the end of last century they had become half-breeds for the most part, and their original title of *Coureur du Bois* was changed into *Bois Brulé*. At this time the Hudson's Bay Company penetrated to the Red River from York Factory on the Bay. Conflicts between the Montreal traders and their *Bois Brulé* supporters and the Company, and their less warlike followers, became of frequent occurrence. The Earl of Selkirk's settlement threatened to give the preponderance to the company of which he was governor, and in 1816, as I narrated to you last winter, the Montreal people, getting desperate, slew, in one day, the company's governor and some twenty of its officers, clerks and men. In 1820 the two rival companies amalgamated, but at different times the misunderstandings between the descendants of the *Bois Brulé*, now coming to be called French half-breeds, rendered the presence of Imperial troops necessary. Some of these troubles arose from attempts on the part of the company to enforce their right to the exclusive trade in furs.

In the meantime besides the Earl of Selkirk's settlement, at Kidonan, there were settling from time to time along the banks of the Assiniboine and Red rivers, retired servants and officers of the company, and as many of them were beyond the control of the company, some sort of government other than that by means of which the purely fur and Indian countries were kept in order, was found to be necessary. The district of Assiniboia, with Fort Garry as its capital and centre, and a radius of 50 miles from it as its boundaries was established. A council of 24, appointed by the governor and committee of the company, in London, but really the nominees of the company's advisers in the fur countries assisted the local governor. Sometimes the commander of the Imperial troops was appointed governor, sometimes the officer in charge of Fort Garry acted as governor; sometimes the recorder or chief judicial officer of Rupert's Land acted in that capacity, and occasionally the company's chief representative in the country assumed himself the chief Magistracy of the colony. The death of Sir George Simpson who was supreme over the company's whole territories and business in North America, embarrassed the board at home, and to avoid jealousy, a retired China, tea and opium trader was appointed as Sir George's successor. He selected Fort Garry as his principal residence and headquarters, and his presence, of course, relieved the governor of Assiniboia from almost all responsibility. A very brief sojourn in the new place convinced the new Governor-in-chief that if jealousy between the company's officers was prevented by his appointment, it was not going to reconcile the local Governor to any interference with his mode of ruling, and Mr. Dallas retired to London, beaten and disgusted. No successor to him was then appointed, but Mr. McTavish, sometime after, was made Governor of the Northern and Southern Departments, leaving the other two great departments under the governorship of the chief officers in each. Mr. McTavish had held the Governorship of Assiniboia since 1858, and after his appointment to the higher position, still retained the local position.

The Imperial Government considering that the necessity for troops arose from the company's attempts to assert their chartered rights too strictly, gave out on the last occasion of supplying men, that no more should ever be furnished and that the company must themselves entirely maintain order within their territories in the future. This led to the adoption of a system of government by commercial and moral suasion, which for a considerable time was in a great measure successful. The claim to exclusive trading was abandoned and if the company sought to gain over on its side any person of influence he was appointed to the council of Assiniboia with a fee of ten shillings for each days attendance or some one of the few salaried positions in the gift of the council. If such positions were not available or did not meet the views of the discontented, a loan of money might secure the necessary influence or quiet the agitator. It was not unusual even to grant time on the payment of duties; for a small import duty on goods had been imposed by the council to defray the cost of government. It was indeed

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until a short time before that I now allude of the utmost importance to those engaged in trade to keep on good terms with the company; for as they were the only carriers of goods into the country a refusal or delay to carry the trader's goods meant ruin to him. But the gradual construction of railways in Southern Minnesota rendered the traders more independent, although even then the company owned the only steam boat on the Red River. With the increase of trade the free traders, as they were styled, became wealthy too, and as the population increased a class sprung up who were pretty much beyond the company's influence. For some of these there were no offices or their demands were too great to be supplied or they felt themselves well enough off to act an independent part.

Agitation sprung up among this class for annexation to Canada. Meetings were held at various times, and I think on more than one occasion petitions to that end were sent down to Canada. Then came the bane of the company's existence, the establishment of a newspaper. For some time it was under the company's influence, and on kicking the traces the proprietor was quieted with a shrievalty. Under Mr. Dallas' Government the paper came into the hands of Dr. Schultz, one of the recent arrivals, come to engage with a relative in the free trade. Mr. McTavish opposed the Doctor's purchase of the paper, and when Governor Dallas left the colony the Nor'-Wester came out squarely against the company and called it opprobrious and ridiculous names, such as the Grandmother of Fenchurch Street.

William McTavish was a man of great shrewdness and penetration, and, as I have said, his government of the district on the new peace lines was remarkably well conceived and carried out, but his early and long life training spoiled him for coping with such a product of freedom and civilization as the press. He was a Scotch Highlander, the son of a judge in the county of Argyle. When a boy he entered the company's service as an apprentice at York Factory, where in due time he became Governor. He had spent his whole life-time in the interior trading with Indians, receiving goods as they came once a year from England, taking from the traders who came from the inland country the furs they brought down to York each year, sending their furs back on the yearly ship to London, his annual accounts going along with them, and finishing up the year's work by despatching the brigade of boats which had arrived with furs back again with goods for next winter trading. His duties at Fort Garry were somewhat different and included the civil government of the colony. But even here the Governor or chief officer was supreme. The only appeal from his authority was to Fenchurch Street, and the appellant had to depend upon the Governor for the conveyance of his letter of complaint. Indeed the local Governor at Fort Garry one time issued an order that all letters leaving the settlement should be left open for his inspection.

It was no wonder that with such training and being possessed of such powers, Mr. McTavish looked with contempt upon the miserable little sheet which issued from the press at Fort Garry with

so much irregularity. He might have bought it off, or he might have started a rival had he estimated its influence at the proper value. In Upper Canada the little paper was eagerly scanned and much of its news quoted in the journals of the day. In that province a great desire had long existed to acquire the company's territories. A committee of the English House of Commons sat to enquire into the company's affairs in 1857, and Judge Draper was sent home to look after the interests of Canada. At last in the early part of 1869 Sir George Cartier and the Hon. Wm. McDougall arranged with the Governor and Committee of the company and the Imperial Government, terms upon which the territorial rights of the company might be assumed by Canada.

So sanguine were the Canadian Government of the possession of the country that before these negotiations were begun they had voted money for the purpose of constructing a road from Lake Superior to Red River, and in 1868 a surveyor and staff were sent up to Fort Garry to begin operations on the western end of the road. Here the first mistake was committed, for at that time nothing had transpired to shew that terms could be come to with the company. The surveyors, in carrying on their operations, had to cross the fields of some settlers, and in the following spring the first trouble arose from this cause, for the settlers compelled the Canadians, by threat of using force, to desist. An ill feeling was in this way begun between the settlers at this place (Oak Point) and the men belonging to the surveyors party, who espoused the cause of their employer.

In the beginning of the summer of 1869, when news reached the settlement of the successful result of the negotiations in London, the Canadian party in the little village of Winnipeg (adjoining Fort Garry) looked upon the matter as a great victory, and assuming that nothing further required to be done, considered the country as already under the Canadian Government. Dr. Schultz had a flag-pole erected in front of the Nor'-Wester office and alongside his own store, and hoisted on it a large flag with the word Canada across its whole face. This was, of course, anything but pleasing to Governor McTavish.

Among other sympathizers with the Governor and the company were to be numbered nearly all the Americans in the place, and some of the lower orders of these during the early morning of the 1st of July, hauled the obnoxious flag down, and in its place hoisted the Fenian flag. This was, of course, hauled down as soon as it was observed; but it was a great grievance to the Canadian party that the people guilty of hoisting the Fenian flag, were furnished by the Governor, on the 4th of July, with a cannon for the purpose of firing a salute in honor of Independence day.

In the meantime the terms and conditions of the transfer were being eagerly discussed by all parties in the colony, and some time in July a meeting was called to consider the matter in public. Three chairmen, or presiding officers, were appointed, one representing the French half-breeds, and another the English half-breeds, and a third, I think, represented the other old settlers. At the request

of the meeting. Governor McTavish appeared, and in answer to a question, said he did not know whether the company meant to divide the £300,000 it was going to receive for its territorial rights, with the natives of the country, nor whether the Canadian Government were going to give the natives a separate sum for themselves. This was the principal and almost the only subject discussed at this meeting, which occupied about an hour and a half.

A report obtained currency that a large staff of surveyors were now on the way up to survey the whole settlement, and some time in August the report was confirmed by the arrival of Col. Dennis and a large party. From this time the French half-breeds began to organize a systematic opposition to the Canadian settlement, and Col. Dennis was firmly warned not to begin his operations; but I think he went on with them, possibly removing to some other quarter from where he had begun.

This was another great blunder on the part of the Canadian Government, for undoubtedly the only government in the country at the time was that of the Hudson's Bay Company. It might be supposed that the threatening aspect of affairs would have warned the Canadian authorities, and to some extent perhaps they did, for the Hon. Joseph Howe was sent up on some mission or other, but he formed so poor an opinion of the country that he went back prepared to advise the Government to give it up if the least opposition were offered to their settlement and keep their £300,000. At any rate he took no steps to find out the truth and left the place as rapidly as arrangements could be made for his return. I met him on his way back and he commiserated me on the untoward fate which led me to such a forsaken country and seriously advised me never to think of remaining there as it would never come to anything.

Without waiting for Mr. Howes' return the Government led it to be understood that Mr. McDougall had been or was going to be appointed Governor of the new acquisition, and that gentleman started off for the North-West ere Mr. Howe had reached Fort Garry.

Mr. McDougall reached St. Paul, then for outfitting purposes the terminus of the railway system, and prepared there for his journey of 400 miles across the prairies. The arrangements necessary were of no slight character, for the party was a large one. It consisted of Mr. Richards, the future Attorney-General and Premier of the new territory; Mr. Provencher, who was to act as Provincial Secretary; Capt. Cameron, an officer of artillery, who was intended to command some future mounted constabulary, and protect the person and secure the safety of the Governor; a Major Wallace, a sort of Major Domo; a son of the Governor's, who was to be private secretary and aide de camp; the families of Mr. McDougall, Capt. Cameron, and, I daresay, some other officers whose names, if I heard them, have escaped me.

Here was the greatest blunder of all. A whole government appointed and despatched to their destination before the people at Ottawa had taken the first steps to obtain legislation for their guid-

ance, and before the necessary measures had been taken to get possession. Even at St. Paul, where were assembled many influential people from the settlement, valuable advice might have been obtained and perhaps disaster averted, but the opportunity was neglected.

No wonder when the news reached the settlement that the prevailing alarm and excitement was intensified, and although one might laugh at the simple barricade at River Salle, one could not but see that there was among the men gathered round it on that cold October morning an appearance of indignation and earnestness which boded no good for the cavalcade which was then wending its way along the old fur trail in Minnesota or Dakota.

These men, as well as those who afterwards joined them, were almost without exception of Indian-French extraction. They possessed and presented more distinctive features of a separate race than did the half-breeds of English-Indian origin. In size they were beyond the English average, in height as well as in build generally. The hair, although finer than that of the Indians, was equally dark and glossy, and worn tolerably long. The hair of the face was all allowed to appear in its natural condition, except where here and there some young man who might have been educated with a view to the priesthood still showed his respect for clerical usage by shaving. The beards were neither long nor full. The complexion, it could be seen, was a blending of both the original races—a swarthy hue, much of which was due to constant exposure to sun and snow. The eyes were dark, large and keen, but that part which is commonly called white, did not appear so clear as in the Indian. They all dressed well and usually in cloth of dark or blue shades; of good quality. Their clothes were made in England, and the styles well became them. Vests, however, they cared little for; a heavy woollen shirt, loosely buttoned at the chest, supplied the place of that garment.

It was the fashion to wear leggings ornamented slightly, and these being wide, took somewhat from the wearer's height, particularly if only worn from the knee downward, as it cut the leg in two. As cold weather was coming on, many of those on the River Salle wore their winter caps; those were quite martial in their appearance being made of the whole fur of the red fox. The skin was merely turned round the wearer's head and the fox's tail was then jauntily thrown back over the top.

So far, you have material out of which no one can doubt good soldiers ought to be made, but when you consider further that all of them had already been accustomed to a semi-military discipline administered by captains of their own selection; that under these leaders they each year went in bands hundreds of miles over the prairie to hunt the buffalo, that each man was furnished with arms of the most approved and deadly kind with which he brought down the buffalo at a gallop and that each rode his own horse, it will be seen that no matter what Mr. McDougall may have thought of their ability to keep him out, they may be excused if they thought of trying it.

They sent notice to Pembina notifying Mr. McDougall not to pass the boundary, for if he did he would be sent back.

Then followed negotiations as to entrance, the particulars of which are unimportant. Capt. Cameron, the prospective commander of the North-west legions, was sent on to the barricade, but the gallant officer was the last person in the world likely to succeed on a mission such as he undertook; possessing hardly a single qualification for the task. Mr. Provencher, reputed a clever journalist, lately on the editorial staff of the chief paper of Lower Canada, also tried his 'prentice hand at diplomacy with the Metis. He was a French Canadian and his relationship to the first Catholic Bishop in the North-west, it was supposed, would add weight to his other qualifications, but he also returned to the long-suffering and expectant group of office-seekers at the frontier without accomplishing anything.

In the meantime the weather was getting colder and the assembled half-breeds had but poor quarters at River Salle. Their leaders, too, feared that while they were guarding the front a movement might be made in their rear, and it was decided to march on Fort Garry. The Governor, although advised of their movements, left the gates open, and an easy capture was made of the place; in fact the Governor was told it was a friendly visit; they came merely to ask for a place to shelter them and a few robes to sleep on. It was soon found that a little tea was wanted, and later in the day a requisition for some pemmican was sent in. At last to relieve the Governor and the company's people from the trouble of serving out daily supplies and keeping trivial accounts of the articles, it was suggested that the keys of the stores be handed to the leader of the insurgents. It was soon after found that there were some kinds of expenditures which could not be defrayed by payment of goods, and as the company had a goodly sum in their own notes in the safe, the key of that repository was asked for and supplied. Thus furnished with the munitions of war, Mr. McDougall hardly obtained a thought from the now contented natives.

Thus the month of November was passing away. Diplomacy had altogether failed, and the talents of the Governor and his Council at Pembina had to find some other mode of employment. But the abilities of those assembled on the frontier received an accession of strength. Col. Dennis found his occupation as surveyor of a country which did not belong to his employers gone, and he retired to aid the Governor and his advisers.

Then was matured a scheme worthy of assembled wisdom. On the first of December the Governor was to issue a proclamation announcing his arrival, and that he had been appointed to the office of Lieutenant-Governor of the North-west. To follow this there was to be a Commission to Col. Dennis, setting forth that as the Lieutenant-Governor was illegally hindered from entering his own territory and assuming the reins of Government, he appointed the said Col. Dennis his Lieutenant-Conservator of the Peace. Col. Dennis should then issue a command to all loyal subjects to rally to the aid of the crown, and those so coming forward were to be authorized to

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burn the houses, to kill the persons, and destroy the property of all those who opposed the entrance of the Governor!

Strange as it may appear, all this was done; and besides, Col. Dennis came into the settlement and caused the proclamation to be set up on the doors of some public places during the night of the 30th Nov. He also enrolled volunteers. When he had committed all this mischief and heard of the effect of his own little proclamation as to burning, killing and destroying on the French half-breeds, and saw that his dupes the volunteers were at the mercy of the well-supplied forces in Fort Garry, he suddenly left in the middle of the night and got as quickly as he could to the American side of the boundary line.

Abandoned by the conservator of the peace, and having no lawful authority from which to receive instructions what to do or how to act, the volunteers decided to disband; but by this time as Riel had taken the command of those collected in the Fort, and assumed to have something to say about the matter. For having obeyed what they were led to believe was a legal call to aid the cause of the Crown, these unfortunate men suffered all the tortures of imprisonment for the coldest part of the winter, and one of their number lost his life.

During this incarceration not one single effort was made by Canadian Government to see that they were either properly fed or clothed, and it was only by the rising of some of their number who escaped and the assistance of a great number of the English-speaking half-breeds that at last their liberty was secured.

After this Riel called conventions of representatives of the whole residents of the settlement, and he obtained the acquiescence of these in nearly all his measures. A bill of rights was passed, and this was really the basis of the Manitoba Act passed by the Canadian Parliament at its next session.

It became apparent to Mr. McDougall that nothing could be gained by warlike measures conducted by a conservator of the peace, and he in due time set his face towards his own country again. Some of his council preceded him; some followed him; Mr. Provencher alone remained on guard over the many valuables left behind, and perhaps the records of state—the archives of the abortive government.

Mr. Riel and his followers, as you all know, remained some nine months in Fort Garry until dislodged by Colonel Wolseley and the troops under his command, and so ended the rising of 1869-70.

Those who have listened to me may themselves now answer the question as to the cause of that rising.

1st. Surveyors were despatched to the settlement before the terms of transfer even had been agreed upon.

2nd. Surveyors were afterwards sent to lay out the country before it legally belonged to Canada.

3rd. The Canadian Government without consultation with any one in authority in the settlement appointed a Governor and Council, all of whom were complete strangers to the country and its people, and so far as was known not a single resident of the country was to be of that Council. I am, of course, aware that, it was stated

that Governor McDougall was to have authority to fill one-fourth the places in the Council from among the residents of the settlement.

4th. The government completely ignored the people, having neither consulted them as to the form of government they desired, nor sought advice as to the mode of settling the question of titles to the lands held by each individual settler, nor the broader question of the rights of the people to a share of the soil, or compensation therefor.

These then were the reasons for the disturbances.

That the difficulties might have been obviated by the appointment of Governor McTavish as his own successor, is an opinion merely, but it is one firmly believed in by all those possessing a knowledge of the country and its people at that period.

That even at the last moment some way of settlement might have been found was hoped, but those entertaining such hopes saw an end at once put to them by the unfortunate ill-timed and insane proclamation of Col. Dennis.

While the leaders of the French half-breed party brought ignominy on themselves by imbruing their hands in blood, it cannot be denied that they obtained rights and privileges for themselves and their fellow countrymen, which, but for the stand they took, would never have been granted; and the boons so secured they have the satisfaction of knowing were equally participated in by those natives and residents of the country who not only took part in the rising but were, many of them, opposed to it and disposed to aid the other side.

The Canadian Government in a short time admitted the stupidity of the course they had pursued and the lawfulness of the demand of the French half-breeds by reversing their policy and conceding nearly all that was asked of them.

The legislation which should have preceded the despatch of a Governor in Council was sought and obtained the following summer.

Representative Government was granted to the people, and when a new Governor was appointed he only took with him a private secretary.

Titles were promised to all those found in peaceable possession.

A grant of 1,400,000 acres of land was made to the half-breed children, and afterwards the heads of families and old settlers obtained grants of land or scrip.

And so ended a disturbance which a slight knowledge of the country and its people and the exercise of some prudence and ordinary policy might have averted,—to the credit of our rulers and a vast saving to the country.

GENERAL DISCUSSION.

American Consul Taylor, being invited to speak, remarked that he could at least concur in the opinion that the difficulties of 1870 might have been averted had the Canadian Government possessed a greater knowledge of the country and its people. It was somewhat remarkable that the recollection of their own struggles in

Eastern Canada for responsible Government did not induce them to see the need of the same thing for the people of the new territory. The solution of the difficulty was the mutual concurrence of the people here and the Government of Canada in establishing representative institutions. With his knowledge of the people of this part of the country, he had always regarded them as equally qualified to discharge the duties of a Government of their own selection as the average population of the American frontier territories, and yet the Government of the United States had never organized a territory in or beyond the Mississippi valley, except upon a popular basis. One of the most remarkable scenes of those times was the gathering within the walls of Fort Garry, at which the people of Red River, exposed to the rigor of a northern winter, with the thermometer 20 or 30 degrees below zero, were discussing the terms on which they were willing to become citizens of Canada. On that occasion Mr. Donald A. Smith was the trusted representative of the Canadian Government. He had also the advantage of being the chief of the great organization which had formerly been in the position of a government. As a result of that conference, a resolution was moved by Louis Riel, and seconded, he believed, by Mr. A. G. B. Bannatyne, calling upon the different parishes to select delegates to meet in a popular convention. These elections were held, and the delegates were assembled in the Convention of Forty, as it was called. Its proceedings were reported by William Coldwell and published in the Nation newspaper. Such men as the late James Ross and others, whose education had been completed in the universities of Canada and England, participated in the discussion of that convention, and, although he had been a careful reader of the debates in the constitutional assemblies of the American States, those debates by the representatives of Red River, in regard to their own rights and privileges, compared favorably with any similar discussions with which he was familiar. There a bill of rights was formulated, Mr. Donald A. Smith conferring with the convention in regard to its provisions, and this action was speedily followed by the pacification of the country and the establishment of the Province of Manitoba. He believed the time would come when the services of Mr. Donald A. Smith to the people of Canada and the people of Manitoba in those conferences would be regarded as of the highest value, and as constituting the most eventful incidents of his life. (Applause).

Mr. J. H. Ashdown, as one of those who had suffered in connection with the troubles of 1870, desired to offer a few remarks. Mr. McArthur had apparently forgotten that prior to the rebellion there was a grasshopper plague, which placed the people of Assiniboia in great need of the bare necessities of life, and that in answer to an appeal for aid, the Canadian Government sent Mr. Snow with a small staff, and authorized him to open up a road from the Lake of the Woods to the then village of Winnipeg. The object of this was to afford employment to the people, and, though it might be questionable whether good judgment was shown, they should respect the motives for the act. He thought that in many respects there was cause for the discontent of the people. He believed the Act

passed by the Dominion Government for the temporary government of the country was a great blunder. At the same time, he thought Mr. McTavish was not guiltless in connection with the rising, and was actuated by some feeling of jealousy at not having been consulted in the settlement of the district. There was a strong Irish American Fenian element here, to whom he attributed many of the evils of the time, and particularly the death of Scott. Their effort was to force Reil into a position from which he could not recede without forcible resistance. The statesmen of Canada had been blamed, but there was room for the belief that they had acted in the best way possible after realizing their first blunder. The food supplied by the French to the prisoners, of whom he was one, consisted solely of pemmican, black tea and sugar, with regard to the position of Mr. Donald A. Smith, his allegiance was divided between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian Government, and he was inclined to think that his allegiance to the former, being the oldest and closest, prevailed. In looking back over the whole affair he thought the country was to be congratulated that so small an amount of misery resulted from it, only three lives in all having been lost, and that it was followed by so much good, not only in the granting of the rights demanded by the people here, but in the opening up of this vast territory to settlement and establishment of its Government upon a proper basis. (Applause).

Rev. Prof. Bryce pointed out that it was that portion of the population having the smallest property interests here that took the initiative and were the most prominent in the rebellion. His impression was that the Scotch and English settlers, who had the largest stake here, occupied a position of neutrality. He would like to have this circumstance explained.

Mr. McArthur thought one great reason why the initiative was taken by the French was because they were settled chiefly along the Red River between the Assiniboine and the American boundary, and were consequently the first whom Mr. McDougall met with in his passage to the country. The Scotch were not entirely neutral, for on one occasion, they gathered at the church in Kildonan to the number of four or five hundred, and sent a representation which resulted in the release of the first batch of prisoners, numbering about sixty. He did not think the French had any grievances which the other settlers had not. The idea of demanding a grant of land arose from the fact of the Hudson's Bay Company having received £300,000 for their territorial rights, in which the people claimed the right to participate. Whether the English sympathized with the rising or not, they accepted the benefits resulting from it. He had purposely abstained from terming it a rebellion, for he did not think it partook of that character.

Mr. Ashdown remarked that the English were with the French in demanding the rights which had afterwards been conceded, but they had confined themselves to peaceful agitation, and when they saw the movement going beyond that, they withdrew.

The passage of a vote of thanks to Mr. McArthur brought the proceedings to a close.

Winnipeg, Oct. 10, 1882.

